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## CLAIMS

1. A deformable-mirror holder comprising a body with a central aperture for receiving a deformable mirror, the central aperture being defined by a plurality of flexible beams, with each flexible beam having an end shaped to provide a supporting surface and a flexible portion that connects the beam's end to the holder's body.  
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2. A deformable-mirror holder according to claim 1, wherein the ends of the flexible beams are co-joined to form a unitary structure shaped to provide a supporting surface.  
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3. A deformable-mirror holder according to claim 1 or claim 2, wherein the beams' ends lie in the plane of the holder's body such that, in use, the mirror is received within the holder's body.  
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4. A deformable-mirror holder according to any of claims 1 to 3, wherein at least one beam is generally L-shaped such that one leg of the L-shape provides the flexible portion and the other leg of the L-shape provides the supporting surface of the beam's end.  
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5. A deformable-mirror holder according to claim 4, wherein the internal corner of the L-shaped beam has a shoulder that extends part of the way along both legs of the L-shape.  
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6. A deformable-mirror holder according to any preceding claim, wherein the plurality of flexible beams are arranged around the entire aperture.

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7. A deformable-mirror holder according to claim 6, wherein the width of the beams is larger than the separation between beams.
8. A deformable-mirror holder according to claim 7, wherein the width of the beams is greater than four times the separation between beams.
9. A deformable mirror and a deformable-mirror holder according to any preceding claim.
10. A deformable mirror and a deformable-mirror holder according to claim 4, wherein the peripheral edge of the mirror is supported from below by one leg of the L-shaped beam and is supported from the side by the other leg of the L-shaped beam.
11. A deformable mirror and a deformable-mirror holder according to claim 5, wherein the peripheral edge of the mirror is supported from below by one leg of the L-shaped beam and is supported from the side by an inwardly-facing side of the shoulder.
12. A deformable-mirror holder as substantially described hereinbefore with reference to any of Figures 4 to 17 of the accompanying drawings.
13. A deformable mirror and a deformable-mirror holder as substantially described hereinbefore with reference to any of Figures 4 to 17 of the accompanying drawings.